

All Conversations About Love Are the Same

Mirian Tavares^a

Abstract

In *The Metaphysics of Love*, Schopenhauer argues that love is a literary invention. For the philosopher, this feeling was a creation of men to mask the real desire. On the other hand, Nicolas Grimaldi, while analysing Marcel Proust's work, enumerates a series of issues that strengthen Schopenhauer's arguments. For Grimaldi, the writer explains the literary character of love in its work. Through the analysis of four films, from different cinematography, this work intends to explore the issue of the representation of love in the art of film. In an attempt to understand how film uses its formal and discursive resources to present or represent this feeling, this paper analyses films chosen on the basis of how they tell their love stories. Beginning with *Gertrud* whose motto, *Omnia Love* says it all. In *The Woman Next Door*, Truffaut reveals the paradox of love and pain. *Wings of Desire* speaks of love and redemption. More recently, Kiarostami offered his *Certified Copy*, a film that asks whether a copy can produce in us the same thrill of an original. If love is an invention of literature, this paper seeks to understand how such an invention is born, and what it consists in modern and contemporary cinema.

Keywords

Cinema, love, philosophy, literature, society

In the essay *Metaphysics of Love*, Schopenhauer reflects on the reason why, year after year, there is news of several desperate couples committing double suicide due to adverse circumstances, preferring to take their own lives instead of leaving their loved ones. For the philosopher, this does not make any sense at all and he does not understand how “two lovers who are confident of each other's love and expect to find their greatest happiness in the enjoyment of it, do not avoid taking extreme steps and prefer suffering every discomfort to sacrificing with their lives a happiness which is greater than any other they can conceive” (Schopenhauer 2000: 11). In this work, Schopenhauer tries to understand the logics behind desperate acts caused by love or by the notion of love disseminated by art. The problem is that while the philosopher finds answers to all the questions he raises, double suicides or small big dramas continue to exist and caused by this so paradoxical feeling that is apparently so vital to

human beings.

Life and death, pain and pleasure—have been present in films ever since cinema discovered its narrative vocation. Passion, a sign linked to despair, can also save, far from the oversimplified good versus evil axis, what causes despair may, at the same time, become a source of salvation. According to Greimas, “(...) Despair has a modal organization of a conflictual nature, insofar as wanting-to-be on the one hand, and knowing-not-to-be and not-being-able-to-be on the other cohabit without reciprocally modifying each other, they contradict and oppose each other by bringing about the internal breakup of the subject (...)”

^aUniversity of Algarve, Portugal

Correspondent Author:

Mirian Tavares, FCHS—University of Algarve, Campus de Gambelas, 8005-119, Faro, Portugal
E-mail: mtavares@ualg.pt

(Fontanille and Greimas 1993: 68). While with obstinacy there is a victory of the subject, with despair there is paralysis: knowing-not-being-able-to-have and desiring.

The films under study in this text were selected under the following premise: The characters acting in each narrative are stuck between despair and obstinacy. Each character, in their own way, feels that love is the answer to all our ills and the only form of happiness and, on the other hand, recognises, albeit unwillingly, that love is also a source of despair and frustration. All love affairs in these films or, indeed, all love affairs portrayed in cinema are represented based on the notion of Western love that has become, through romantic literature and audiovisual means, a drama that involves matches, mismatches, disappointments, and misplacements. In some cases, fiction provides us with a happy ending, in others, happiness is merely a glimpse, a delirium, a desire, and never an answer that is found through or due to love.

In *Metaphysics of Love*, Schopenhauer argues that this feeling is nothing but a literary invention. For the German philosopher, “love” is a human creation with the purpose of disguising the real and truly devastating desire. In an attempt to understand how cinema uses its formal and discursive resources to present/represent this excessive and diffuse feeling, four films were selected from different decades, which have in common the fact that they tell love stories marked by excess: excess of love, passion, despair, desire, or delirium. If love is a literary invention, one can affirm that love is or constitutes itself as a language. The language of cinema, originating from the nineteenth century bourgeois literature, is easily compatible with literary narrative adapting texts but also transforming them into images and giving new meanings to new and old stories that deal with the excessively human drama of relationships and everything that surrounds and drives them.

The language of cinema has already been

extensively discussed and studied and this paper does not seek to address it extensively. However, it is believed that it is necessary to include a few notes on the subject in order to better understand how the directors of the films under study make use of this language and manage to transmit with discourse resources inherent to this medium, the notion of love disseminated through literature and clinically analysed by the German philosopher.

NOTES ON THE LANGUAGE OF CINEMA

“A film-maker isn’t supposed to say things; his job is to show them”, said Alfred Hitchcock. Nowadays, there is not a unique and/or uniform discourse that can be defined as the Canon of cinema language. But, undoubtedly, a model has been established as the true cinematographic discourse, which as any Western art model has been constantly denied and fragmented, only to be reconstructed and remain as such: North American cinema. To be more specific, North American cinema of a *Griffithian* nature, whose narrative descends from the nineteenth century *feuilleton* novel, which film critic Noel Burch denominated as Institutional Mode of Representation (IMR).

Cinema quickly converted itself into one of the most important cultural texts of the twentieth century, as well as an important medium for the artistic experimentation that emerged in Europe in the between wars period. “The greatness of cinema comes from the fact that it is a ‘sum’ and also a synthesis of many other arts” (Sadoul 1983: 35). Historian Georges Sadoul, who has written one of the most famous and comprehensive *History of Cinema*, highlights the importance of the emergence of a new language marked mainly by its polyphony. Cinema is a language of synthesis and, as such, it takes ownership of other languages and invents new modes of narrating and presenting old and new narratives to the world in the same way literature previously did.

The birth of cinematographic narrative, the moment when the camera starts to create and not just record, is considered by a great number of theoreticians as the beginning of art in film to narrate stories through images. One of the primordial elements in the constitution of narrative is montage. The concept of montage is essential for the theory of cinema and for cinema tout court. It is generally considered as “The most specific element of cinematographic language. Its importance among the seventh art means of expression has changed throughout the history of cinema, but it is unlikely that its prominence will be questioned” (Jurgenson and Brunet 1992: 17).

However, the language of cinema cannot be reduced to the concept of montage. Throughout the twentieth century, several film-makers and theoreticians gave meanings to the images that were projected on screens. Cinema is an art form of time and space; it reflects the new time, and the new spatial relations that were developed in the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Arnold Hauser (1998) considers that the Bergsonian concept of time referring to the notion of continuity and simultaneity intensely marks art in the twentieth century. He also believes that no other mean was able to express this new concept of time better than cinema.

Theoretician André Bazin, considered as a “realist” in opposition to the “formalists” who defended montage as the *raison d'être* of film art, believed that the cinematographic image would be able to reveal the world, to make it more visible and capable of being explored with the camera's capacity to penetrate deeper and with more acuity into the real world. But Bazin recognises that despite the ontological nature of the photographic image—the basis of cinema image, films reveal the world and, at the same time, have a language that distances them from reality. Cinema is not just revelation but also construction and manipulation.

In what way do film-makers like Dreyer (*Gertrud*),

Truffaut (*La femme d'à côté*), Wenders (*Der himmel über Berlin*), and Kiarostami (*Copie conforme*) use the language of cinema to translate the language of love, of that idealised and literary love which became part of Western imaginary and led Schopenhauer to anticipate, in several years, the ideas of Freud on life and death instincts? What resources does cinema provide these authors to narrate their stories? Luís Buñuel, a Spanish film-maker and poet said: “All conversations about love are the same, all have their delirious chords”. The films under study in this paper are similar in many aspects: in the way they deconstruct film discourse, in the elaborate link established between text (script) and images, and above all, in the choice of themes that express visions of excessive and petulant love.

GERTRUD—LOVE IS EVERYTHING

In 1964, the Danish film-maker Carl Dreyer directed his last film—*Gertrud*. Based on a play by Swedish playwright Hjalmar Söderberg, the film is considered, along with *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, as one of Dreyer's masterpieces which he started to shoot in 1918. Common characteristics in his filmography can be identified, which makes him undoubtedly an authorial director whose trademark is visible in each film. It can be stated that the work of the Danish film-maker is compatible with the type of cinema that was produced at the time in North European countries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were at least two marking trends in this filmography: a strong realistic nature and the visible presence of theatre influences. In what may seem paradoxical at first glance, realism and theatricality, his works converge into a film discourse that is marked by dialogues and/or monologues that portray with surgical precision both the bourgeoisie and bohemian society at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The influence of German Expressionist Cinema emerges mainly in the lighting. The intensity of

dark-light contrast was used in a very significant manner in Dreyer's films and also in the cinema that was produced in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. In the Danish film-maker's filmography, there is always a handmade care with "decor" and an endless search for technical solutions to resolve representation issues raised by the script. More than once, Dreyer stated that his concern with technique was directly linked to the crucial question of his cinema—the capacity to reveal characters' feelings. In an interview conceded to Michel Delhay in 1965, published in issue No. 170 of *Cahiers du Cinema*, the film-maker states: "What interests me, above all, is not to capture the words they say, but to seize the thoughts that are behind the words" (Bazin 1991: 35).

Gertrud is a film that, above all, addresses the feelings behind words. The play that served as the basis for the script holds an autobiographical nature: Söderberg had lived a similar situation and wrote the play as a reaction to the suffering caused by love. *Gertrud* is a free woman in love with the notion of love that she experiences in her marriage. Her husband, a rising politician, does not give her the time or affection that she believes she deserves and, thus, decides to seek her ideal in a relationship with a young composer. This relationship is nothing but the recreation of her first and greatest love story, also with a musician, Gabriel Lidman, the "poet of love".

Juan Antonio García, in a work dedicated to the Danish film-maker, states that *Gertrud* is "a romantic character, in the literary sense of the term" (Gómez García 1997: 168). The notion of love, which inspires Schopenhauer to reflect upon, is undoubtedly the one that was disseminated at the time, a direct descendent of Werther's loves. The romantic love, according to the philosopher, functions as a moral justification for desire. Human beings need to procreate and, as such, embellish a primitive act with theories and poems in a vain attempt to find a higher answer for their basic needs, similar to those of irrational animals. In *Metaphysics of Love*, which is completed with the

Metaphysics of Death, Schopenhauer discusses the instincts that move people: Life, which is expanded and perpetuated through reproduction, and death, which is a certainty from which everyone wants to escape.

Reflecting upon Proust's work, Nicolas Grimaldi states: "The experience of love would, thus, make us experiment the presence of what aesthetics would only make us experiment absence: Love fulfilled the promises of art" (Grimaldi 1994: 17). *Gertrud* is, herself, an artist. At a given moment, her husband states that love is for artists and bohemians. And it is among artists and bohemians that she believes to have found the answer to her endless quest for plenitude: Her lovers, first Lidman, followed by the young composer, live and breathe art and, thus, are able to, better than anyone else, live and breathe love. The drama of the character is that none of them thinks love the way she does, none of them is ready to give up everything to live only as the object of her affections. Faced with the impossibility of experiencing total love, *Gertrud* decides to move away and lead a lonely life, away from the bustle and enchantments of the city, in a humble house in the country, which reflects the state of mind of a hermit.

Dreyer directed the film but he also wrote the script. *Gertrud* is a film of words, a dramatic text, which is unveiled through dialogues that turn into monologues through the craftsmanship of the director. It starts with a scene with *Gertrud*, at home, talking to her husband. The entire space is theatrical, the actors' movements follow rigorously Italian stage entry and exit prompts and there is no field depth, the background of the stage is brought forward toward the spectator making the characters seem flat, without density. Rarely do their gazes meet and it seems that they are only talking to themselves. The other is merely a stage fixture, they do not respond to the calls made to them, because the dialogue, in fact, does not exist, it is a soliloquy interpreted by several characters. Each of them, in their own way, talks about their

individual dramas, about the incapacity to love and the desire of having a lover who is never a person. Like in Proust's work, the loves in *Gertrud* are ideals and non-personified. When it meets the loved one, love fades away and leaves. Grimaldi considers that one of the pillars of Proust's *Recherche* is the discovery that we love in the other "exactly what a work of art announces: another world" (Grimaldi 1994: 14).

The film-maker presents the character's quest through a raw *mise en scène* that gives the spectator a glimpse of society at the time through scenic elements: furniture, works of art, light fittings, and the sober and distant posture of each of the characters. The excess of love that obsesses Gertrud is never revealed by gestures, but their absence, in the apparent coldness of her look and her almost aristocratic posture. The excess comes from thoughts transformed into discourse—which reveals the ideal origin of this feeling, present in language and distant in daily life. In the scene of the reunion between Lidman and Gertrud, when the former lover asks her to get back together and states that he never stopped loving her, the spectator sees an image of two people superimposed, as if they were only one, but who are looking in opposite directions, revealing in this scenery game, what the discourse will reaffirm. There is no salvation anymore that story has been lived and has died in the past preventing a happy ending in the present from happening. For her, Lidman managed to push her away gradually when he decided that his work was more important than the love he claimed to feel for her. This discreet gesture, which is observed through a flashback, is presented through the absence of the artist and the presence, marked by small everyday gestures, of Gertrud. The emptiness of the house and a sentence found by chance make her decide to leave Lidman and, at the same time, leave the hope to find in other men of her notion of love. She states that she chose to experience carnal pleasures and forget about love which, in this film, and in Proust's work, merely exists as a notion of how-it-could-be.

The final scene shows an older Gertrud in her country home, receiving the visit of an old friend. According to Gómez García (1997), the technical staff working with Dreyer at the time tried to dissuade him from including this scene in the film, as it contradicted the realistic tendency that marked the work of the film-maker and also this film. The scene is kept in as an afterword and is also present in the work of the Swedish playwright. Gertrud reads a poem she had written when she was 16 years old, with three verses. All of them end with the stanza: But I loved. As if love was the justification of a lifetime and stood above all other things. In this way, Dreyer finishes the film providing the spectator with a coherent portrayal of the chosen character and as an epitaph, the phrase: *Amor Omnia*. Love is everything. Gertrud says good-bye to her friend, whom from far away, in the background, repeatedly waves and interprets a farewell.

THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR—NEITHER WITH YOU NOR WITHOUT YOU

François Truffaut directed his last but one film in 1981—*The Woman Next Door*, an intimate and passionate story that reflects the influences that always accompanied him, Roberto Rossellini and Jean Renoir. From Rossellini, Truffaut absorbed the taste for natural scenarios and sensibility in the manner he directed his actors, particularly women. From Renoir, his fellow countryman, we find in Truffaut's work, the delicacy of the themes and the simplicity with which he narrated complex stories. The film director wrote the script for *The Woman Next Door*, which he had already adapted in several films, books of "lesser" genres, as considered by literary critics, such as detective *noir* and science fiction. Perhaps because he believed, like Renoir, that great literature was inadaptable, as it would always be prone to cause comparisons that would detriment the film, thus, he decided that it would be the best to pay homage to great stories of authors who did not have any intention

to make great literature.

The film starts with the end. A tragedy announced and told by a neighbour who narrates, as if she was talking on television, the drama that she witnessed and of which there is a glimpse because, in the background, while she appears in an American shot, the spectator sees and hears ambulances and police cars slowly moving away. Starting with the end is not an innovation of the *Nouvelle Vague*, the school of the French film-maker, responsible along with the Italian Neorealism, for the profound transformation of cinema in the 1950s. Truffaut admired North American classics, film-makers, like Billy Wilder, who did not blindly follow the Studio System rules but were able to mark their own signature in each new work. In 1950, Wilder presents one of his masterpieces—*Sunset Boulevard*, the story of decadent artist and an equally decadent system: Hollywood. The film starts with a dead man, in the swimming pool, narrating the story and explaining why he had suffered this fate. This resource, instead of provoking lack of interest for the plot, increases the curiosity of the spectators who wish to have an opportunity to take a look at the past, like a *voyeur* who would achieve the prowess of travelling to the past: Something that only art, more specifically the art of film, manages to offer.

Wilder's drama is grandiose while Truffaut's is discreet, one almost does not fathom that the characters, from suburban and stable bourgeois families, are about to explode. A young couple, with young children, lives the bourgeois dream in a small town on the outskirts of Grenoble, until the house next door, vacant from some time, is now inhabited by a childless couple. Gradually, a latent tension is unveiled which first appears in a discreet form—exchange of glances, casual encounters. Soon, there is an explosion that reveals the story behind the appearance: The woman next door and her neighbour have been lovers for the last seven years and the reunion causes the retightening of love and desire,

now forbidden, because they are both married to other people.

Like Gertrud, Mathilde is a woman who believes in love. But, unlike the cerebral and literary love of the former, her notion of love is more passionate and violent, so violent that she is unable to resist and literally succumbs when she realises that her forbidden desire is corresponded but impossible. She takes refuge within herself making her fall into a depression that brings her to hospital. Truffaut always conducts the story in a discreet way, in a natural scenario that makes the story more realistic and credible. The characters are subtly lightened, without much dark-light contrast but giving particular density to shadows and dimmed lights. The spectators know it is a film because, at the beginning, the film-maker introduces the neighbour who narrates to the spectators, the story of those couples. Other than that, the camera remains discreet, observing what is going on and helping spectators penetrate into spaces that, outside the big screen, would be unreachable: the intimacy of households. Like his master—André Bazin, Truffaut believes that image can be revealed through the eye of the camera and, in order to make it happen, the film-maker must allow the world that he constructed reveal itself.

In this film, love is transformed into illness. Mathilde cannot live with her lover, nor can she live without him. For Grimaldi, love in Proust is only described as pathology: "Because we only love what makes us suffer and because love is the most common trait of a curse (...)" (Grimaldi 1994: 8). For the author of *Recherche*, there is only one option—stop suffering or stop loving. One could raise the question, as Schopenhauer did, why does a couple choose the path of tragedy? How is it possible that two educated and civilised people are not able to resolve a love problem in an educated and civilised manner? Once again, love only exists in excess: in this case, in excess of despair. Gertrud's calm decision to withdraw from the world does not seem to be a viable

option for Mathilde. In fact, it leads her to, in the peak of her passion or pathology, kill her lover and commit suicide afterwards.

It is interesting to observe that in both Truffaut's and Dreyer's films, the notion of love that drives the characters originate in the romantic dramas addressed in Schopenhauer's essay. They are desperate and unique loves, unrepeatable, and are only repeated as a farce, which occurs with Gertrud and the young composer, or in the form of a reunion with Mathilde and her true and only passion, Bernard. In both cases, the most rational solution is denied and the characters choose isolation or death. Like Werther, Goethe's emblematic character, Gertrud and Mathilde are fragile people who do not bear the weight of frustration of will—the first motivation, according to the philosopher, that makes “a John finds his Mary”. Schopenhauer does not deny the existence of love beyond literature. He acknowledges it in daily life: “The Werthers and Jacopo Ortis do not only exist in romances; Europe produces every year at least half-a-dozen like them: (...) (yet, they had an ignored love): For their sufferings are chronicled by the writer of official registers or by the reporters of newspapers” (Schopenhauer 2000: 3-4).

Love is a serious matter and, as such, the philosopher decides to dissect it in order to better understand this feeling that, according to him, causes such a fuss. His reflection leads him to conclude that its importance is vital, because love is the impulse that drives people toward each other, promoting unions that will guarantee the preservation of the species and the composition of the next generation. In the films under study, the question raised by Schopenhauer does not even come up in any of the cases under study as, beyond the notion of copulation, there is not a notion of conception. Gertrud and Mathilde are driven by the desire of plenitude—only that specific other would be able to complement them, and without them, life would not make sense. Although paradoxical love does not repudiate the philosopher's thought, as what

drives them, more than love itself, is their will for a life that, in both cases, only exists by and through the other.

WINGS OF DESIRE—THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS

In 1987, in his film *Der Himmel über Berlin*, Wenders shows a few angels wandering over a devastated city. They are lost and anguished creatures who, like the film-maker's characters, are far from home and do not belong to anywhere. Thus, Wenders, who is a wanderer, gets lost in Berlin, a city that he has adopted as his own, bringing invisible beings who land on things and are next to people without being seen. They are improbable angels who, having looked after humans for so long, no longer know how to look after themselves. The city is presented through fragments, with long *plongées* that present the world seen from above, looked upon by these deeply colour-blind beings, as they are unable to distinguish colours.

The film starts with a prologue: In the very first plan, there is a handwriting poem:

Als das Kind Kind war, ging es mit hängenden Armen, wollte der Bach sei ein Fluß, der Fluß sei ein Strom, und diese Pfütze das Meer (When the child was a child, it walked with its arms swinging. It wanted the brook to be a river, the river a torrent, and this puddle to be the sea).

The text—*Song of Childhood* is written by Peter Handke, a writer, film director, and collaborator of Wenders in several films. Spectators hear the voice of Damiel, one of the characters, reciting a poem with a circular structure, the rhythm is marked by the repetition of the word *Kind* (Child) and the notion of innocence—the child does not know it is a child, and still confuses dream with reality as if it was a perpetual motion, without anything marking its boundaries.

In his filmography, Wenders, a trained

philosopher, emphasises more complex aspects of human existence and reflects upon people's endless quest for answers to fulfil their lives. In his own unique way, he philosophises with the use of images, on what Schopenhauer denominates as the will-to-live: wandering beings who seek, desire each other, and follow different paths. Because the reunion of characters in Wenders' work begins with the reunion with themselves. With photography work between documental and post-apocalypse, the film-maker allows characters to wander in parallel or anti-ethical worlds, like dream and reality. Because, as the children in Handke's poem, the characters, as such, do not know that they are characters. This film-maker's film feeds on this innocence.

Wings of Desire is a bitter-sweet film: The angels, who wander through the city, have hope despite the desolating and fragmented images of a Berlin still divided by the wall. The view of the film director, transmitted by his angels, is bitter but, at the same time, hopeful. And hope emerges as some kind of overturned redemption, a magic moment when heaven and earth unite with the fall of an angel. This is not the sole biblical passage in the film. The Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians is quoted to remind that people need to return to childhood and to the age of innocence, so that they may finally restart a return to the starting point as the only form of salvation. And Wenders' fallen angel, unlike the biblical one, seeks his own condemnation, not because he tried to defy the Creator, but because of love. Love for a fragile creature that is too human wanders aimlessly through the streets of Berlin.

The city, composed of fragments, is never shown in her plenitude, but in pieces. There are destroyed streets and squares; a wall which metaphorically serves to show the enormous barrier that exists among those who live in a metropolis like Berlin. Everybody is nearby, but terribly distant and condemned to some kind of solitude that will only be healed, according to the film, if people manage to cross the barrier, if they

jump over the wall or jump into the infinite.

Like in a film, the city does not exist without a montage, without someone who joins the fragments to reassemble them. And the angels, wandering over everything, do not understand anything anymore. They became deaf from listening so much and blind from seeing so much. Their capacity to pay attention has been diluted and the city has been turned into a constant buzz of indecipherable murmurs, of which they are only able to filter the pain. Like strangers, they wander through the city, now concrete, which has become strange to them, with new paths that need to be learned, traversed, and discovered, bit by bit. The city is seen from below and it is not the same—the great distance between dream and reality is shown in a sublime manner, thinking of sublime as the abyss that faces people. Wenders' fallen angel is a recurrence in his filmography. Real or metaphorical, his characters feel displaced, without a destiny.

"There is no greater love story than ours. That of a man and a woman", says Marion in one of the greatest love dialogue/monologue in the history of cinema. For five minutes, the loved one speaks while the fallen angel listens. But she does not just speak to him, Damiel, but also to the spectators who are included in this intimate moment through the eye of the character who, at a given moment, speaks facing the camera, looking directly into the eyes of those who see her. In this moment, she speaks about the notion of love, bigger than they are, which does not belong to either of them, but to all who, like them, dared to take the risk. Love, in this film, is more than a feeling, it is a metaphor. And it is as such when in the final scene, Damiel, who holds the rope on which Marion balances, says, in off: "A mortal child was not generated, but an immortal collective image".

CERTIFIED COPY—BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY

Iranian film-maker Abbas Kiarostami is a

multi-faceted artist. As well as film-maker, he is also a photographer and a poet. In several interviews conceded since he started his career in the 1970s, he states that the work of an author is one that extends throughout his life. His films would always be the same, cut and stored in different manners, because his subject does not change: people and their lives, in particular the lives of people who do not fit a pattern of normality and/or conformism. Kiarostami considers that he is more of a listener than a narrator, because he likes to let images flow, without forcing them to tell a story, which allows the spectator to get involved in the flow of images and in a different temporality.

Certified Copy, a film shot in 2010, takes predominance in Kiarostami's production for being considered by critics as a genre film and a romantic comedy, even though everyone recognises the signature of the author in this work. An English writer travels to Tuscany to promote his latest book—*Certified Copy*, in which he argues that there is no difference in art between the copy and the original, they are both original in different ways. He meets an ancient art French *marchand*, who invites him to travel to Tuscany's countryside. While she drives the car, he speaks about his ideas, alleging that even Mona Lisa is not original, as it is the copy of a "real" woman who inspired Da Vinci to produce the painting. In a *café*, they are mistaken for husband and wife and, from that moment onwards, they start to act as if they were, in fact, married for 15 years and had a son of their own.

One of Kiarostami's authorial features is that he gives time to spectators to reflect on what they see, he does not direct them, nor does he manipulate them, he simply waits. Images gain a temporal density that refrains the time off-screen, there is no rush and the images show themselves. It could be said that it is the type of cinema that Bazin defended, films that allow the eye of the camera to wander and reveal, in this ride, the ontological character of the image that is projected onto the screen. As a photographer and poet, each

frame is constructed in a delicate way and, in the apparent naturality of the images, hides the work of a craftsman. In *Certified Copy*, one of the first films he directs outside Iran, the landscape in Tuscany is everlasting, it functions as the perfect frame for the story that unveils before the spectators' eyes and, at a given moment, it is unclear if the characters are interpreting a relationship or if, in a very special way, they are really living it.

There is no indication in the film to distinguish the passage of the "real" to what is "interpreted"—nothing reveals that the characters are conscious of the game they have started. If, in art, there is no difference between copy and original, in relationships, the value of a staged marriage, in sentimental terms, is the same as a real marriage. What they discuss is intensively lived, by both, who assume the originality of the moments they share, in that particular space, which seems to be timeless. While they interpret a relationship, and the spectator starts to doubt if it actually exists, there are background scenes of a wedding that is taking place: bride, groom, and guests. The character, who does not have a name, lets her feelings flow and reveals this assumption when she goes to the toilet of a restaurant to paint her lips red, wear a pair of earrings, and return to the table as if, in that moment, she were another woman.

They both speak to the spectator. The position of the actors allows for the sharing of dialogues, among them, and the spectators, who start to become part of the love story unveiling on the screen. Grimaldi, with regards to Proust's *Recherché*, states that love, in Proust, is a love on its own right; the other is merely an object that embodies, momentarily, the notion of love that each person carries within. The suffering that love causes is nothing more than the lack of satisfaction before the real object, which does never correspond to what is idealised by the lover. If love causes suffering, as recognised by Schopenhauer, the falsification of a revelation must also include this

component, which in the film is experienced by the characters with the same intensity as they would experience real feelings/sufferings.

Love, in *Certified Copy*, is a pure simulation. It can be considered as a meta-film, as it reveals the mechanisms that cinema uses to tell a story. Suddenly, without a warning, the characters incarnate a love story. And the film leaves the spectators lost because they are urged to react, because the characters summon them to come into play, through glances, words that seem to be directed to them and, above all, through the story they tell: two people who meet, who follow different paths, who love each other and suffer, who are unable to communicate, who do not give up to find, in the other, the answer to their yearnings and anxieties. To sum up, it is the story of love that all literature and cinema present, time and time again, simply changing characters and scenarios.

CONCLUSIONS

The German philosopher concludes *Metaphysics of Love* stating that people do not love individually; they love, in the other, the possible eternity that he/she may represent. They love, ultimately, humanity and their own species; they love the idea of continuation, even if this continuation implies suffering, because the will-to-live is greater and is, according to Schopenhauer, what moves us. In *Metaphysics of Death*, he analyses the counter-flow of this will-to-live, which balances people between desire for movement and awareness of impending quietude.

Grimaldi, after studying Proust's imaginary, concludes that love is a result of the will to discover worlds, to reveal oneself through the other, in the work of the French writer. Love, more than art, causes unusual sensations and promises, although it may not always fulfil those promises, unions and plenitude which, in the case of Proust, are never really fulfilling or satisfactory. Because people love what they do not have, what is revealed but does not really exist—the

other is a construction of who loves.

Cinema, through its already secular history, it inherited from literature—the capacity to narrate, to create imaginary worlds, to fill empty spaces with images. In the history of cinema, there is a genre that has existed from the very beginning and that, throughout the years, has been adapted to audiences, desires, and times: the drama of love. Four film-makers from different countries, in different times, have told a love story in their own way. *Gertrud*, *The Woman Next Door*, *Wings of Desire*, and *Certified Copy* are different but hold many common traits, beyond the fact that they are, essentially, four love stories.

In these films, the film-makers are also scriptwriters who give the text a special rhythm underneath the image. The words are directed to and for those specific images. In some way, they are films that marked the filmography of the film-makers: Dreyer, in several interviews, assumed that he nurtured a special affection for *Gertrud*, his last film. Truffaut, between a drama of war and a literary adaptation, directed an intimate and personal film, as if it was marking a return to the principles that the movement he helped created in the 1950s, the Nouvelle Vague, disseminated: short daily-life stories of unimportant people who could be anyone. Wenders, with *Wings of Desire*, initiated a series of films that allow the film-maker to play with imagined reality, with thought as a sensitive matter, made visible through cinematographic images. And Kiarostami apparently changed his signature while directing *Certified Copy*.

Four love stories of an almost intimate and documental nature, even Wenders' angels are credible and wish to mingle with surrounding reality. The black and white photography emphasises the documental nature of Berlin, divided and devastated by World War II. The characters seek plenitude, they want to discover or rediscover love, their own notion of love, which is embodied by a specific person, that

can only be lived at a given moment and whose experience can only be repeated as a farce. Kiarostami stated that he is always making the same movie. All great film-makers are always making the same film. A story that continues is endless, because it justifies the very species, because it provides humanity with poetry and desire, all too human, according to Schopenhauer, to immortalise itself.

References

- Bazin, A. 1991. *Buñuel, Dreyer, Welles*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos.
- Burch, N. 1983. *Praxis del Cine (Theory of Film Practice)*. 4th ed. Madrid: Fundamentos.
- . 1995. *El tragaluz del infinito (The Infinite Skylight)*. 3rd ed. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Chabrol, C., J.-L., Godard, J. Rivette, E. Rohmer, and F. Truffaut, eds. 1999. *La Nouvelle Vague (The New Wave)*. Paris: Petite Bibliothèque des Cahiers du Cinéma.
- Fontanille, J. and A. J. Greimas. 1993. *Semiótica das paixões (Semiotics of Passions)*. São Paulo: Ática.
- Gómez García, J. A. 1997. *Carl Theodor Dreyer*. Madrid: Fundamentos.
- Grimaldi, N. 1994. *O Ciúme—Estudo sobre o imaginário proustiano (Jealousy—A Study on Proustian Imaginary)*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra.
- Hauser, A. 1998. *História Social da Arte e da Literatura (The Social History of Art and Literature)*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Jurgenson, A. and S. Brunet. 1992. *La práctica del montaje (The Practice of Montage)*. Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa.
- Sadoul, G. 1983. *História do Cinema Mundial (The History of World Cinema)*. Vol. 3. Lisbon: Livros Horizonte.
- Schopenhauer, A. 2000. *Metafísica do Amor, Metafísica da Morte (Metaphysics of Love, Metaphysics of Death)*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.

Bio

Mirian Tavares, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Algarve, Director of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences and Coordinator of CIAC—Research Centre in Arts and Communication, University of Algarve, Portugal; research fields: with academic studies in communication sciences, semiotics, and cultural studies (Ph.D. in communication and contemporary culture, from the Federal University of Bahia), she has developed research work and theoretical production in fields related to cinema, literature and other arts, as well as artistic and aesthetic film studies.